

GROUPS ACTIVE IN HARINGEY

Defend Haringey's Health Services Coalition is an alliance of local groups and individuals campaigning against cuts and privatisation of our healthcare services:

www.haringeyresidents.org/healthcoalition

Haringey Alliance for Public Services (HAPS) is a network open to all those living or working in Haringey. We oppose running down, closure or privatisation of local public services, and support campaigning for improvements. We promote communication and co-ordination, mutual aid and solidarity among all those affected:

www.hapsnews.net

Haringey Claimants Action Group is a self-help support group for people claiming benefits, fighting for our legal entitlements and fair treatment. For details of monthly meetings email us at:

claimants@haringey.org.uk

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum is an independent umbrella organisation for the 30 local Friends groups of Haringey residents who are active in "taking ownership" of, and protecting and improving, our parks and open spaces:

www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk

Haringey Housing Action Group. If you have housing problems or want to take action for better housing in Haringey, come along to one of our meetings or email us at:

housingaction@haringey.org.uk

Save Haringey's Youth Centres Campaign has been set up by local teenagers who are worried that five council-run youth centres will face funding cuts as the full effect of the spending review is realised. For more info email:

saveharingeyyouthcentres@mail.com

EUROPE IS REVOLTING

In 2010 a wave of protests swept across Europe, as workers and disaffected people showed their anger towards austerity cuts being imposed upon them by their governments.

In Greece, strikes and demonstrations raged. Thousands took to the streets shouting "burn parliament". Banks were attacked by people who were in no doubt who to blame for the financial meltdown.

At the end of summer, workers and students in France brought the country to a standstill in protest against a rise in the retirement age. Strikes and blockades prevented fuel distribution, causing havoc. Students held general assemblies and occupied their schools and universities. The struggle has radicalised large numbers of people, who went from apathy to actively involved in political debates and actions.

September 29th was a day of strikes and actions in towns and cities all over the continent.

100,000 marched through Brussels. In Spain, 10 million people, half the workforce, came out on a one day general strike. Protesters prevented trucks from delivering goods to markets in Madrid and Barcelona. In Dublin, a man was arrested after blocking the gates to the Irish parliament with a cement truck. Written on it in blood red paint were the words "Toxic bank" referring to the Allied Irish bank. An estimated 3 million workers walked off the job in Portugal's first general strike in 22 years.

All over Europe, millions of people are showing their disapproval. Yet the austerity measures are being pushed through. So what to do now? The fight for social justice is a long and difficult one. The movement needs to keep growing and intensify. The rage of the students at Millbank and direct actions like the Vodafone protests are hopefully a sign of things to come in this country.

WHO WE ARE

Haringey Solidarity Group is a collective of local people who want to get rid of the current system which places profit and power before people's real needs. The only effective way to do this is for people to get organised, fight back and take over the decision-making in our communities and workplaces.

To that end we support and participate in local campaigns, spread ideas and help create effective opposition to the powers that be.

If you want to find out more about what we do visit www.haringey.org.uk or contact us:

HSG, PO Box 2474, London, N8

0845 2235270

info@haringey.org.uk

THE WINTER HOTS UP

Even with winter upon us, things are heating up on the streets. The day may soon come when the ConDem(ned) alliance realise this time it has taken on more than it can handle. The working class is beginning to fight back. Below are just three examples from many.

Anti Cuts Alliances

These are forming all over the country, and we know of over 100 already. In Islington 200 angry people turned up to their first meeting. In Lewisham protestors took it a stage further and occupied the council chamber to stop the Councillors passing any cuts. Demonstrations, marches and meetings are happening all over the country. Just type "anti cuts campaigns" into any web browser and see for yourself.

Students

We all saw the wonderful job done on the Tory

party HQ in November. The next day students in Manchester occupied the Principal's office in solidarity with those arrested at Millbank. 300 school students in Barnet marched on the local Tory surgery and dumped old shirts - accusing the Tories of taking the shirts from their backs. Students are continuing to fight for the rights of working class kids to go to university and not be lumbered with thousands of pounds of debt.

Vodafone

Up and down the country local people have been occupying and closing Vodafone shops in protest of the company's tax dodge of nearly £6 billion. Boots, and shops owned by Philip Green (including Topshop, Dorothy Perkins and Miss Selfridge) have also been targeted for their tax dodging activities.

SPOTLIGHT HARINGEY

Tottenham Chances took over the old British Legion Club on Tottenham High Road back in May 2008. Setting up as a community organisation, they have been improving the building ever since. With very little money but with a lot of support from people living near the building, the centre has now been going for over 2 years.

As well as music events and meetings they also host professional wrestling, drama classes, weight-loss programmes and dance classes for children. A large number of groups from many different political views and ethnic backgrounds use Tottenham Chances. Even in Tottenham it is difficult to find cheap meeting and social spaces, so the

venue has been a lifeline for many of us.

They have a large function hall with a capacity of 250+, a bar room, a sub/basement lounge and also a recording studio complete with rehearsing room.

It is well worth checking out the place and while you are there you could think about offering to help out. By using the venue you will get a friendly cheap space and the centre will get some much needed money. So, everybody wins.

If you want to know more either pop in (it's opposite Tottenham police station) or email Penny the centre co-ordinator at chancespenny@yahoo.co.uk

SCHOOLS OUT!



The recent demonstrations across the country have revealed the depth of the anger felt by young people about the coalitions' deep cuts in education budgets. But these protests were not only about the increase in tuition fees for University students but also the withdrawal of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 16-18 year olds attending college. EMA provides £30 a week to poorer students, paid direct to them, to support their learning at school or college. It will mean that over 4,000 young people

in Haringey will be deprived of this financial support. Such was the anger at these cuts that Hornsey School for Girls held a sit down protest after the Head teacher locked the gates to prevent students attending the demonstrations in central London. As one student commented "£30 a week means nothing to the millionaire politicians and bankers but it does to me. They need to be shown how angry we feel. We need to stand up to the ConDem government and the cuts they have imposed on us."

HARINGEY'S ONLY INDEPENDENT NEWS SHEET

TOTALLY INDYPENDENT

"We can't even vote yet, so what can we do? Are we meant to just sit back while they destroy our future?" - Leyla, 14 year old protestor at 23rd November student demonstration.

IT'S THE RICH THAT GETS THE PROFITS. IT'S THE POOR THAT GETS THE BLAME

The ConDem(ned) alliance claims we have to make cuts and "make them deep". But, the cuts have little to do with getting the economy back on its feet. They are being used to hit a long-standing Conservative goal - to destroy all unions and social care, rip apart the Welfare State and let the private sector take control of everything.

The Tories, backed by the spineless Liberals, are using this "crisis" to decimate the Welfare State, council services, and the safety net of benefits for the poorest in our communities. They are using those on benefits as scapegoats to divide us. But they are also attacking middle income families who rely on child benefits, tax credits and jobs which will soon disappear. Estimates suggest up to 750,000 public sector and 900,000 private sector workers will lose their jobs. That's 1.6 million people like you and me who will be faced with "signing on", repossessions or worse.

Estimates suggest up to 200,000 people will have to move out of central London as housing benefits won't cover their rents. Many of these are presently in work! Even Boris Johnson has described this as a form of social cleansing.

IT'S THE RICH THAT GET THE PROFITS, IT'S THE POOR THAT GETS THE BLAME

They claim savings need to be made, so the public sector and benefits are cut. But why are the poorest always the hardest hit? If we need to make savings why write off SIX BILLION pounds Vodafone owe in taxes? Why reduce Corporation Tax from 28% to 24%, saving big business billions of pounds? A leaked Treasury document suggests up to £120 billion are lost every

year through uncollected taxes and tax evasion. Maybe we could "close the gap" by taxing the very rich more. Will they? Don't make me laugh.

Politicians say our deficit is too high, so loads of us have to lose our jobs. In fact our national debt is lower than Germany's, America's and Japan's to name a few. After WWII our debt was higher in comparison yet we introduced the welfare state, the NHS, state pensions, comprehensive education and built millions of council houses. Strange that!

In February 2010, the Royal Bank of Scotland (bailed out with OUR money and a reason for this "crisis") paid over 100 employees more than a £1 million each in bonuses. The richest 1,000 people in the country now have more than £400 billion between them. The rich just keep

getting bloody richer and Cameron and Clegg's policies will make sure we get more of the same. That's why we say they have declared war on the working classes.

RESISTANCE IS EVERYWHERE

People are starting to realise it's a con by and for the rich. Some are beginning to fight back with strike action and forming "anti-cuts groups" throughout the country. The Greeks and French have taken to the streets to fight back. The students showed us the way here. We should all do

the same. But we are moving slowly and the cuts are coming fast. Rather than sitting back and moaning we need to get bloody angry and organised. Thatcher tried to kick us with the hated poll tax. We stopped that and she was booted out by her own party. Let's make the "cuts" Cameron and Clegg's poll tax.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Find out about your local anti-cuts campaign. If there isn't one - start one. Support all strikes. Every strike that wins gives others confidence and worries the bosses. Go on, and support, any demonstration you hear about. Basically stand up and be counted. There's a war going on out there. Which side are you on?



NHS — UNDER THE KNIFE



Don't be fooled by Government spin about protecting NHS funding. There may be no huge front page budget cuts, as seen elsewhere in the public sector, but spending on the health service is only set to increase by 0.4% over the next four years. After inflation is taken into account, that could add up to a 20% reduction in funding - nowhere near enough to meet the needs of an ageing population or keep up with advances in treatment.

Behind the scenes, the Government has also demanded that Primary Care Trusts cut their budgets by 6% (£20bn). These are the organisations which coordinate local area health services, such as GP surgeries and hospitals, as well as overseeing the development of public health initiatives such as addiction teams, health education and awareness campaigns. Staffing cuts of 54% across the whole of London have already been announced, which will mean 3,300 job losses. Inevitably services will be affected and even the boss of NHS London, which oversees the capital's PCTs, has warned to expect a deteriorating standard in health provision and increased patient suffering.

But it gets worse...

The Government is pushing through a massive restructuring of the NHS over the next two years, at a cost of £3bn. It will sweep away the PCTs, and all the other organising bodies, such as NHS London.

The public health work of the PCTs will be taken over by local authorities, where it will have to compete with social services for the dwindling funds there. The commissioning and coordinating of patient care services will be handed over to the 'consortia' boards of local GPs. They will decide what local services or treatments will be provided and how they will be organised. They will also be fully liable, meaning that if the finances don't balance, the consortium will go bust.

The Tories, and Liberals, herald this as a way to give back control to the community and improve local services. In reality it will do the complete opposite.

Most Doctors are sceptical about the reforms and see little benefit for them or their patients. While GPs can design clinical care schemes, they have no experience of the large scale administration of contracts and finances that would be required. As a result many consortia will hand over management of services to private companies. By dismantling the framework of the NHS the Government is opening the door for the commercial sector to step in and take control of the UK's health care.

Reform of NHS bureaucracy and management is needed, but the Tory plans have nothing to do with improving patient care or the health service. Once again, it is the ideology of market forces and commercial enterprise that lies behind the promises and rhetoric.

JOB SEEKERS AGONY

The Daily Mail love to run stories of the rare cases of people exploiting the benefits system. They don't print stories of the bureaucracy that thousands of people have to endure every day. Here is part of Jill's story.

"My JSA [Job Seekers Allowance] was stopped, but when I went to the jobcentre to ask why, they couldn't tell me. By then I hadn't any money left, so I tried to apply for a crisis loan to tide me over till my JSA was sorted out. The jobcentre told me I could only apply between 9 and 10am. I went back the next morning but there was a long queue, mainly mothers with children, and only one person to deal with them all. I wasn't going to be treated that way, so I found the phone number to ring. I told them my JSA had been stopped, but they told me I couldn't have a crisis loan because their records show that I'm entitled to JSA!

"I went back to the jobcentre, told them this, and they said there would be a payment to my bank the next day. There wasn't. By this time I'd only had one good meal in three days. That day there was a meeting of a local claimants' action group and I told them my story. They listened, and several said they'd go with me to the jobcentre the next day in support. I suggested we leave it till the afternoon, just in

case the money arrived in the morning. Luckily my money came through. But it shouldn't have to be like this. I managed to stay calm through all the hassle, but it doesn't surprise me that some people get angry and shout at staff or kick a door in."

This is not an isolated incident. Every day there are mistakes in the system, which is slow to put things right, possibly because of understaffing. Their way of working is incredibly bureaucratic: if there is a problem with your JSA and you need to see someone, you have to ring an office in Glasgow to make you an appointment with someone sitting just a few feet away!

Claimants are not treated as people, but as numbers on a computer screen. Even the most articulate of us are given the run-around. But it can make a big difference if you know others who have been through similar problems. They can offer not only understanding but practical support. In the longer term we have to fight for changes to the system, and particularly to fight cuts in welfare, but day-to-day we have to support each other. There are a growing number of claimants' groups, in north London boroughs (Hackney, Islington, Haringey, Kilburn) and in many other parts of the country.

HARINGEY ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC SERVICES



Haringey Solidarity Group is one of many groups across the borough who have banded together to form Haringey Alliance for Public Services (HAPS). The aim is to fight against the proposed cuts of up to £100 million from Haringey Council budgets. This will have a drastic effect on our public services. Proposals for 1,000 job losses across the council by March 2011 will result in a reduction in the breadth and quality of well-used public services. So a group to defend our services is vital.

residents of the reason for public services and why we must stand up for them. We have seen the debate about the recession diverted from the banking sector's unethical practices to how and when to reduce the public deficit. There is a general acceptance in the media of the need for huge cuts in public spending and services. But this has taken place without a full and open debate of the alternatives or the implications of cuts to public services.

Groups involved represent all sectors threatened by these cuts. By uniting together the message will be clear and the opposition strong. We do not, and will not, accept cuts or privatisation of our local services nor the loss of public sector jobs which are necessary for the effective running of these services for everyone's benefit.

HAPS anti-cuts rallies reflected the growing opposition to the cuts locally and has been replicated across the country. Through HAPS we aim to continue our fight against the cuts and the myths and propaganda that there is no alternative but to cut public services.

We encourage people from all community groups, residents associations, workplaces and individuals to get involved with HAPS to demonstrate a strong, united opposition to the cuts. It is also there to remind Haringey

1000 JOBS TO GO AT HARINGEY COUNCIL

The attack on public services is also an attack on public sector workers. Current estimates are that 750,000 workers in central and local government will lose their jobs over the next four years. Those who are saved from the chop face pay freezes, reduced redundancy payouts, revised pension schemes, and 'renegotiated' terms and conditions. Haringey council are axing 1 in 5 of its staff, with cuts in salaries, holiday and conditions for those who remain.

The public sector is the most unionised sector in the UK. The unions PCS (civil servants), Unison and Unite (local authorities, education and healthcare), have a combined membership of over 3 million workers. All three unions have workplace branches that are actively defending their members' rights and challenging the redundancies. PCS in particular has been fighting government funding reforms since before the election,

successfully challenging Labour's plans to reduce public sector redundancy payments. Importantly, there have been moves to build a unified resistance against the spending cuts with links between unions. PCS and Unison have recently pledged to campaign together and take joint action against the cuts.

Unions are not without their problems. Their leadership can be too fond of 'maintaining good relations' with those in power, and can be slow to act. Perhaps they could learn from the students! But the strength of a union is in its members. They are its united front, its voice in the workplace and its manifested action. It is through the support and activity of their members that the unions have been able to, and will continue to, fight and campaign against the attacks on services and jobs.

THREE STRIKES AND WE'RE OUT

This autumn saw a series of strikes as workers responded to attacks by management against jobs and working conditions.

London Underground workers have gone on strike several times since September 2010 against the threatened loss of 2,000 jobs. These redundancies would threaten Tube safety and undermine public transport in general. In Haringey, picket lines have been held at the Northumberland Park depot, Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters stations. Support the strikers and don't let Transport for London use the 'crisis' to cut corners at the expense of public safety.

At the Coca-Cola manufacturing and bottling plant in Edmonton, workers held a series of strikes in September and October. The action began in response to a below-inflation pay rise, imposed by a

bullying management, and redundancy threats. This from a company which made £620million profits in 2009!

The London Fire fighters were next to come out. Their management have threatened to sack all staff unless they agreed to new shift patterns. These would lead to emergency cover being cut at night, when people are most vulnerable. The fire fighters faced hostile media propaganda and two members were injured during picket line confrontations with AssetCo, the scab company hired to break the strike. Despite this, public support has grown as people rightly oppose cuts to vital services.

At a time when the government is talking of further impeding the right to strike, this makes supporting workers in struggle even more crucial. A victory for one is a victory for all...

WHO BENEFITS

New light was shed on the anti working-class agenda of this government by the Tory conference. Many regressive measures were unveiled but the most virulent attack was against claimants and the welfare system.

Welfare benefits face cuts of £18 billion by 2015, with housing benefits (HB) bearing the brunt. Different categories of HB claimants are being targeted. Families will only be able to claim for a maximum of a 4-bedroom property. Single people will have to wait until they're 35 to claim for a 1-bedroom property. At a time when there are more than 10 applicants for every job, the government will reduce HB by 10% for claimants on Job Seekers Allowance for over a year. All HB claimants will be affected, with those in London losing at least £23 a week!

These cuts aren't necessary but are part of the government's political agenda. Tax evasion by big business costs us up to £120 billion a year. But they're not interested in that money. Instead they want to eradicate the very idea of a welfare system and with it the possibility of a society based on mutual aid and solidarity. This is precisely what we must fight for!

Cuts to all benefits follow the same pattern: they target the most vulnerable among us and leave the privileged untouched. As women earn less than men, they will generally suffer more. Cuts announced to working tax credits and childcare will mostly affect them. Pensioners are also being targeted, as people over 65 will have their state pension credit frozen. At the other end of the age spectrum, the Education Maintenance Allowance will be scrapped.

The government says it wants to lower benefits to make 'work pay'. Their aim is actually to throw us into exploitative dead-end jobs, and force down wages. So let's refuse this and demand they increase the minimum wage instead!

We must stand united against the cuts. Resistance is already growing, in Haringey with initiatives like the Alliance for Public Services, nationally with the Vodafone and student protests. As we hear shouts of "Tory Scum" though, let's remember that Labour had the same agenda in store for us. It's no surprise that the Eton-bred upper middle-class elitists who rule us have decided to punish the poor. The real problem is the capitalist system, which will always favour profit-making over solidarity and social justice. Let's bear that in mind in the struggle ahead.



LOCAL ACTION ROUND UP

All over Haringey, residents and workers are saying 'enough is enough'. They are getting together and fighting for the public services and facilities they expect. Below are a few examples of what is the beginning of a co-ordinated campaign against the ConDem cuts.

YOUTH CLUBS

In the largest youth-led campaign for years, secondary school students have set up the 'Save Haringey Youth Centres' campaign. They've attended youth events and collected over 1,000 signatures against the threats of closures. Last November saw over 200 attend a showdown with the borough's Chief Executive, demanding the closure threats be removed. One campaign member said: 'Some young people have already lost their youth clubs and we're so upset for them and we need to fight harder to make sure they get their's back too.'

PARKS

After past cuts, park users set up 40 local Friends Groups campaigning for proper maintenance, management and investment. These successes are now in jeopardy again. The borough-wide Friends Forum saw this coming. Throughout 2010 they spoke out publicly, lobbied Councillors, helped launch the HAPS anti-cuts alliance, and helped develop new London and national networks of Friends Groups to campaign nationally.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Teachers at COHENEL college on Tottenham High Road have organised a number of successful short strikes against cuts to courses and threats of redundancies. They've held lunchtime protests at the college entrance, attended by students, teachers, other staff and passers by.

BIG SOCIETY BIG CON

David Cameron has an idea. It's called the Big Society. What that means in practice is yet to be seen, but we've seen some suggestions banded about: community run schools, shared spaces, cooperatives, neighbourhoods organising resident services, volunteering, and local influence over local decisions.

It may sound like a good idea. People should have control over what affects them locally. It even sounds like the Government are advocating what we've been saying for years - that we need a society based on our needs and run by horizontal structures that encompass the local community. So what's the big idea?

The simple answer is that Dave's Big Society is a Big Con. It's really a mask for the upcoming and vicious assault on the welfare state. When Cameron talks about volunteering he means staff losing their jobs and the reduction of services.

When he suggests local control of schools he's really abandoning education to the locally rich and powerful. Cooperatives are his way to keep workers in line, as their self interest, he hopes, will chime with the bosses. Individualising services, he knows, inhibits collective ways of thinking and organising, and would allow the Tories to lower taxes for business.

The Big Society is all about the individual, not community. Cooperatives, direct democracy, and local decision making are all brilliant when done collectively and for a collective interest. When they are rolled out into a market under capitalism, they inevitably lead to the rich doing what they want, and everyone else losing out. Business only works for its own interests, not society's. People want true control over their lives and to provide for everyone's needs. Cameron's Big Society will never do this.